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Bent's Old Fort
National Historic Site

Colorado

The Project

Reconstruction of a historical adobe fort along the Santa Fe Trail. Originally built in 1829, the fort was added to and remodeled until its abandonment in 1849. By the time of reconstruction over a century later, the original adobe fort had "melted" down to walls only 1 foot high.

The Site

Located on the Arkansas River Valley approximately ½ mile from the river, the reconstructed fort is situated in a semi-arid southwest landscape of sagebrush.

The Design

The fort was constructed of readily available materials - mostly mud adobe bricks and plaster, viga beams from local cottonwood and pine trees, and millwork and hardware from the fort's blacksmith shop. Originally designed by Anglos and built by 150 Mexican-Indians from Taos, the same was done again with a Mexican-American contractor and workers from Taos. Although concealed modifications to the original structure's appearance included reinforced concrete foundations, stabilized adobe in the core walls with natural adobe on the exterior, radiant heat floor slab, concrete stabilizing ceiling slab with roofing, and electrified candles, the visible parts of the building were the same as the original structure.

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Denver, Colorado

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